

32. The isolated polypeptide of claim 29, wherein the immunogenic fragment of (b) comprises at least 20 amino acids.

33. The isolated polypeptide of Claim 29 wherein the amino acid sequence of (a) has at least 95% identity to SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

34. The isolated polypeptide of Claim 33 wherein the isolated polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

35. The isolated polypeptide of claim 33 wherein the isolated polypeptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

36. An isolated polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

37. A fusion protein comprising the isolated polypeptide of Claim 29.

38. A fusion protein comprising the isolated polypeptide of 36.

39. The isolated polypeptide of Claim 29 wherein the polypeptide is the immunogenic fragment having no more than two single amino acid substitutions, deletions or additions relative to the aligned sequence.

40. The isolated polypeptide of Claim 29 wherein the polypeptide is the immunogenic fragment having no more than one single amino acid substitution, deletion or addition relative to the aligned sequence.

41. The isolated polypeptide of Claim 29 wherein the polypeptide is the immunogenic fragment which matches the aligned sequence.

42. An isolated polypeptide encoded by an isolated first polynucleotide wherein the isolated first polynucleotide hybridizes under stringent conditions to a second polynucleotide which encodes the polypeptide of SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6; wherein stringent conditions comprise overnight incubation at 42° C in a solution comprising: 50% formamide, 5×SSC (150 mM

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NaCl, 15 mM trisodium citrate), 50 mM sodium phosphate (pH7.6), 5× Denhardt's solution, 10% dextran sulfate, and 20 micrograms/ml denatured, sheared salmon sperm DNA, followed by washing the filters in 0.1× SSC at about 65° C; wherein the isolated polypeptide, when administered to a subject in a suitable composition which can include an adjuvant, or a suitable carrier coupled to the polypeptide, induces an immune response that recognizes a polypeptide having the sequence of SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

43. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of Claim 29 or the full complement to the isolated polynucleotide.

44. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of Claim 29, wherein the isolated polynucleotide encodes the polypeptide comprising SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

45. An isolated polynucleotide comprising the polynucleotide of SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5.

46. An isolated polynucleotide comprising the polynucleotide of SEQ ID NO:1.

47. An isolated polynucleotide segment comprising a polynucleotide sequence or the full complement of the entire length of the polynucleotide sequence, wherein the polynucleotide sequence hybridizes to the full complement of SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus the full complement of any terminal stop codon, wherein the hybridization conditions include incubation at 42°C in a solution comprising: 50% formamide, 5x SSC (150mM NaCl, 15mM trisodium citrate), 50 mM sodium phosphate (pH7.6), 5x Denhardt's solution, 10% dextran sulfate, and 20 micrograms/ml denatured, sheared salmon sperm DNA, followed by washing in 0.1x SSC at 65°C; and, wherein the polynucleotide sequence is identical to SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon, except that, over the entire length corresponding to SEQ ID NO:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon,  $n_n$  nucleotides are substituted, inserted or deleted, wherein  $n_n$  satisfies the following expression

$$n_n \leq x_n - (x_n \cdot y)$$

wherein  $x_n$  is the total number of nucleotides in SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon,  $y$  is at least 0.95, and wherein any non-integer product of  $x_n$  and  $y$  is rounded down to the nearest integer before subtracting the product from  $x_n$ ; and wherein the polynucleotide sequence detects *Neisseria meningitidis*.

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48. An expression vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 43.
49. A host cell transformed with the expression vector of Claim 48.
50. A process of producing an isolated polypeptide comprising (a) culturing the host cell of Claim 49 under conditions sufficient for the production of the encoded polypeptide and (b) recovering the polypeptide.
51. A nucleic acid vaccine comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 43 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
52. An isolated polynucleotide segment comprising a polynucleotide sequence or the full complement of the entire length of the polynucleotide sequence, wherein the polynucleotide sequence is identical to SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon, except that, over the entire length corresponding to SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon,  $n_n$  nucleotides are substituted, inserted or deleted, wherein  $n_n$  satisfies the following expression
- $$n_n \leq x_n - (x_n \cdot y)$$
- wherein  $x_n$  is the total number of nucleotides in SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5 minus any terminal stop codon,  $y$  is at least 0.95, and wherein any non-integer product of  $x_n$  and  $y$  is rounded down to the nearest integer before subtracting the product from  $x_n$ ; and wherein the polynucleotide sequence detects *Neisseria meningitidis*.
53. The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 52 where  $y$  is at least 0.97.
54. The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 52, where  $y$  is at least 0.99.
55. An expression vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 52 which codes for a polypeptide that, when administered to a mammal which can include an adjuvant, or a suitable carrier coupled to the polypeptide, induces an immune response that recognizes a polypeptide having the sequence of SEQ ID NOs:4 or 6.

56. A host cell transformed with the isolated polynucleotide or an expression vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 52.

57. A process of producing an isolated polypeptide comprising (a) culturing the host cell of Claim 56 under conditions sufficient for the production of the encoded polypeptide and (b) recovering the polypeptide.

58. A vaccine comprising the polypeptide of Claim 29 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

59. A vaccine comprising the polypeptide of Claim 36 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

60. The vaccine of Claim 58, wherein the composition comprises at least one other *Neisseria meningitidis* antigen.

61. An antibody immunospecific for the polypeptide or immunogenic fragment of Claim 29.

62. An antibody immunospecific for the polypeptide of Claim 36.

63. A method for inducing an immune response in a mammal comprising administration of the polypeptide of Claim 29.

64. A method of diagnosing a *Neisseria meningitidis* infection, comprising identifying a polypeptide of Claim 29, or an antibody that is immunospecific for the polypeptide, present within a biological sample from an animal suspected of having such an infection.

65. A method for inducing an immune response in a mammal comprising administration of the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 43.